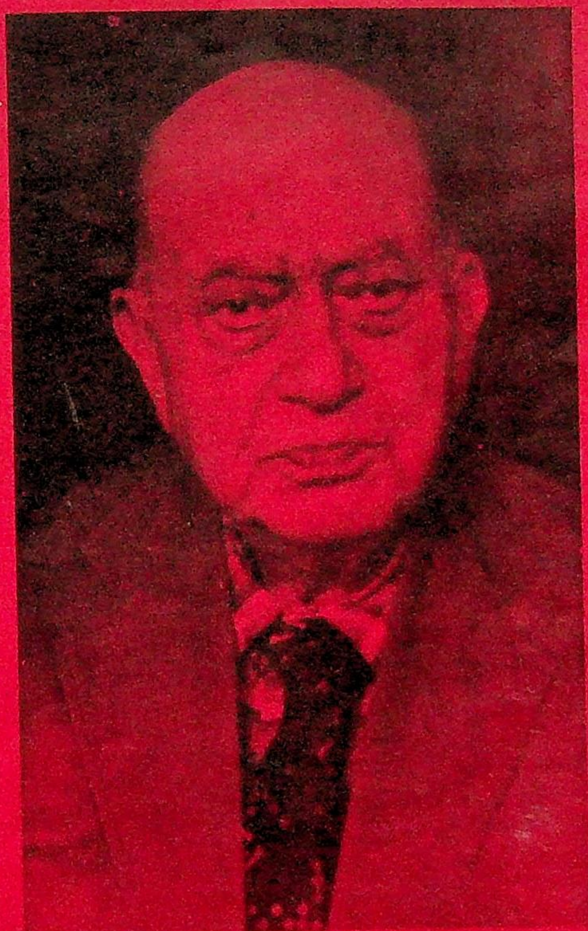
SOME REMINISCENCES



Justice (Retd.) J. N. Bhat

TALE OF DISILLUSIONED & UNNOTICED WELLWISHER

I compiled a book mentioning my experience as a Judge in sensational and critical cases decided by me. The book went twice to computer, where it was distorted, chapters missing and passages misplaced. The book could not be published as such, it had to be re-written as a whole for which I have no energy. I therefore, compiled this article giving a brief out-sketch of my experiences.

After my retirement from Judgeship of the High Court my friends and well-wishers have been insisting upon me to write some thing about my life experiences. As, according to them, apart from my professional achievements. I was associated with many political and social affairs; and as such I could throw light on the events political, social or religious that had taken place Iduring my life time. I once attempted this exercise but later gave it up as I had no records or written material with which I could substantiate what I would write because by nature I am careless sort of fellow and have not preserved any records. Few people would believe my personal version unsupported by other documentary evidence.

After the insurgency in the valley many friends have become more insistent that I should leave something in writing about my knowledge and experiences in this life. This pressure, I have not been able to resist and have decided to say a few things about my experience of the J&K High Court. Therefore I jotted down some notes about some important judgements delivered by me, which I shall reproduce in this booklet. I shall only add a chapter about the general trends of events and developments during my life time. I may write something about these if I live for some time more. I shall confine myself for the present to mention some important Judgements and experiences as a judge.

I was born in Muran village (Pulwama District) of Kashmir in February 1910. After getting education in the local Primary school I shifted to Srinagar for further studies and completed my Matriculation upto graduation with honours in 1930 in the state school at Fateh Kadal and Sri Partap college, Srinagar. Right from the 6th class upto my M .A .LL.B (Lucknow) I was a merit scholarship holder. I am a gold - medallist and all round best prize winner. I stood first in all examinations and in individual subjects

bagging big prizes from the hands of then ruler Maharaja Hari Singh Ji .I stood IIIrd in the Punjab university in B.A (Hons.) and beat the record in M.A. in the Lucknow university. I passed both M.A and LL.B in two years in Lucknow. I was vice- President of the University Union.

My ambition as a student was to become a professor. Law will become my life profession afterwards was quite foreign to my mind. A relation of mine Mr N.K Hak who retired as District and Session Judge, Kashmir advised me when I joined the Lucknow University in 1930 to take both M.A and law simultaneously as in those days two courses could be completed in two years.

During my two years' study at Lucknow I devoted most of my time M.A. course and spent less time for LL.B examination, yet passed my LL.B with distinction in just two years.

When I reached Kashmir my problem was about my future profession. I was not interested in the legal profession, but there were not many chances of my getting any other employment. I was the most highly qualified Kashmiri with a distinction, yet the chances of my being appointed on a good job were very weak. In those days a Commission headed by Sir Bertrand Gallancy known as "Gallancy Commission" had laid stress on more representation of Kashmiri Muslims in the administration and recommended many steps for their absorption, the pandit cause suffered greatly. My friend Sh. M.K.Tikoo and myself tried for Munsifship and Tehsildarship more than once but were never selected. Mr. Tikoo once got a letter from a relation of his who was an official in the Selection Board to the following effect after long pause of the interview. The message was brief and consisted of the following sentences "The cat out of the bag, it is Mr....." Thus informing him and through him me that we were not selected.

God's ways are mysterious, If I were selected as a munsiff or tehsildar I could expect to retire as perhaps a District Judge or Wazir wazarat (now called Deputy commissioner). I was dejected at not being selected but God had some thing far better for me than the petty job of munsiff or tehsildar .

Though not very happy, I joined the legal profession, worked as a junior with Sr. Advocate Pt. Sarwanand Naqaib who after some time went on a pilgrimage for two months. In his absence , I conducted his

cases in all courts independently. When he returned from the pilgrimage, I started my independent practice at Shopian, a town which was nearest to my home village Muran. With God's grace I became a successful lawyer and slowly developed taste for the profession. I practiced in shopian for 14 years, although I wanted or should have shifted to Srinagar for practice earlier because, I had a very strong ambition to become a member of the Legislature. In those days there was only one Hindu seat from Lower Munda to Kohalla including, the whole Valley and Northern part of the State, and if I moved to Srinagar my chances of getting elected on that seat would greatly diminish, hence my overstay in Shopian. After a great struggle and almost passing sleepless nights for over three months, travelling from Lower Munda to Kohalla to Muzaffarabad, Handwara, Kupwara and all distant places, I succeeded and became a Praja Sabha-Sad, as an MLA in those days was called. I was elected a member of State Legislative Assembly again in 1962. There after followed the "Qabali Raid" on Kashmir and in April 1948 I moved to Srinagar for Practice. In Shopian I was the topmost lawyer with handsome income and was a very important personality, but in Srinagar I had to make my debut.

One very important episode or development at Shopian may be mentioned. There was Presiding Officer who was favourably inclined towards me and the word went abroad that I "Jana Bhat" {an abbreviated local form of my name Janki Nath Bath} was the real judge and the presiding officer a mere stamp.This state of affairs irritated my other colleagues. The Presiding Officer was transferred and was succeeded by an extremely honest and efficient Judge. After three or four days of his office, his attitude towards me became hostile and he would not listen to even genuine arguments from me. I could smell the rat. It became a big problem for me for about two weeks whether I should continue practice in that court; because in a single court the attitude of the Presiding Officer for a practising lawyer is very important. In the third week, however, when the presiding officer sat in his chair he took out a file from his tray and mentioned to me that I had created some complicacies in the case. He called the complaining legal practitioners and in their presence asked me to set right the complications created by me and at the same time assuring me that he would not change even a comma in what I wrote, but only the ultimate decision would be his. On subsequent days he gave me a

number of files to take home and set right the mischiefs committed by me in the case. Consequently, I became over careful and conscientious to set right the wrongs attributed to me. The learned judge kept his promise of not changing a single word of what I wrote. I also acted faithfully and conscientiously. Later on the Presiding Officer told me that the complaining officer had met him at his place and accused me of acting as the virtual judge and the real presiding officer a pawn in my hands. But his observation within two weeks of dealing with me he found contrary to what had been complained to him, and, therefore, he entrusted a number of files to me in presence of the complainants. This presiding officer ultimately became a fast friend of mine and until his death we loved and respected each other.

Any how when I started my practice at Srinagar I desired a Monthly income of rupees 500/- only which was a very big sum in those days. My income for the first month was Rs. 325/- which gradually rose. Due to my hard work and some intelligence I rose to the top of my professional in 1960's which increased my income too. When I left the profession in 1963 my income was rupees one lac per year an unbelievable amount in those days. My predecessor in office in High Court told me a number of times that 40% of the entire High Court cases were mine and my success was 85%.

I have been throughout my life punctual-rather over-punctual-a habit which I have retained in this old age. Before I became a Judge, the Hon'ble Judges would not be very strict in observing court hours. They would start 3/4th of an hour late. When I came to chair I would start punctually at the fixed court time. I would reach court whether in Srinagar or Jammu 15 minutes before the court time and would be in my chair correct to the minute. The honourable members of the bar too would reach within time. I would leave for lunch and return back at the fixed hour. I never stayed beyond fixed court hours. In this I earned the cooperation of the honourable members of the bar also. When in a division bench, I would persuade my colleagues to be punctual.

Throughout my career as judge and on other important assignments, I always maintained a smiling posture. I have never given any indication of losing temper. Even if some counsel would argue things which were irritating. I never used any harsh words or stopped him, but cut short his argument with the remark, "I am prepared to listen anything for any length

of time but your friends around frown at me why I permit you to talk like this". At the time of my retirement the President of Jammu Bar praising me to the skies for my depth of knowledge, etc., said, "One thing about the Lordship was that he was always smiling and would send us out laughing even if we had lost a case in his court". My Lord, the Chief Justice among other things said that I was his friend, philosopher and guide.

One of my principles was that no body was above the law. This epithet was used by judicial officers and President of the Srinagar Bar and Jammu Bar on my retirement. The then news papers in State also wrote editorials in my favour at the time of retirement, all emphasising that I considered no body above the law.

My principle practice was to give substantial justice to people. In High Court mine was the highest record of disposals. Not only disposals but serious study and discussion of the subject involved. I was very hard-working and would study the case myself and my judgement would include many more authorities than cited by the parties. Sometimes judges suppress the contrary point of view, I would consider contrary view also and try to distinguish them or differ from them. No suppression. Ordinarily one adjournment would be granted and it was very rarely a case listed would not be heard.

I was a popular judge, nick named " A writ Judge" because before I came to the bench hardly any writ would be issued by the Hon'ble Judges. Once I had strong case against the government and all my pleas were accepted by their lordships but ultimately writ dismissed. My predecessors in office had issued one or two writs, once in a case represented by me. When I began to work as a judge the number of writs increased till it assumed a form of flood. The counsel all the time trying to get the case heard by me. During my tenure as a judge I have issued hundreds of writs either sitting singly or in a Division Bench. Once we admitted 67 students in the Medical College, Srinagar who were refused admission by the authorities. The college had to open separately a class for them.

I held many good assignments after my retirements. I was a member of the senate of Jammu and Kashmir University. I was President's nominee in the Banaras Hindu University with the power of veto. I was also a member of Services Board of the Reserve Bank Of India. I was Chairman

of Suratgarh Evaluation Committee - a dispute involving billions of rupees and was assisted by two IAS officers one from Govt.of India and another from Rajasthan Government. I was Chairman Khadi and Village Industries Board of the State. I was Chairman of 3rd Pay Commission in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. I was Chairman of Oil Selection Board. I was Chairman of Indira Congress Legal Aid Cell. A director of the Board of Directors of Jammu and Kashmir Bank and member of so many Trusts and Education Institutions.

About the quality of my work I need to cite a few observations from some eminent people. A lawyer of International practice and repute who has held many high assignments in foreign countries remarked that during his practice in India and outside India he had found only two capable Judges, Lala Meher Chand Mahajan, Chief Justice of Supreme Court and myself. The remarks which were made when other sitting high court judges were present, embarrassed me. Hon'ble Justice Muzahar Ali, who had come from M.P. when I met him the first time remarked that my judgements were the best and were the guide for the high court judges. Mr. Begh an eminent counsel, then Advocate General of J & K and now a prominent lawyer in the Supreme Court, when met me for the first time revealed that he was very anxious to meet me as my judgements alone were of a high standard. The same were the remarks of the Dean of the Faculty of law of Kashmir University. The then Chief Justice of Delhi in open court more than once refused to take notice of any ruling of the J&K High Court unless it was from me.

These are some of the remarks made about my functioning as a judge of the High Court. The reader should not misunderstand that I am exaggerating things or talking high of myself, but I submit with all humility that these observations are understatements rather than an exaggeration. This can be verified from those persons who have some personal knowledge about the working of the High Court in those days (a long period back) or by the study of the High Court records of those days or law reports of the time. Sometimes I would allow the publication of my judgements only in the local Law journal but the All India Reporter requested for copies of judgements for publication in the A.I.R. Some judgements had the remarks "No table case lost".

When I resigned as member of the Service Board of Reserve Bank

of India after a year and a half, the top brass of the Board wrote a confidential letter to me expressing anguish on my resignation inter alia they said " we never had such a member nor shall we have in future"

As Chairman of the Suratgarh Farm, as mentioned earlier, I was assisted by two IAS Officer. When the member from Rajasthan retired ceased to be member on the Committee, he addressed a letter to me writing that he had learnt more in my company of two years than he had learnt throughout his service. When I presented the report, the Revenue Secretary of the Government of India, the famous Swami Nathan, thanked me profusely and embraced me stating that the Government never expected a unanimous report. The Central Government representative had fixed the compensation to Rajasthan Government at Rs. 15 crore while Government representative of Rajasthan claimed rupees one hundred and fifty crore. Due to my personnel efforts both the parties settled down their dispute on a common figure. Really a very difficult job to make them agree to a common figure.

On the 3rd Pay Commission Report the then Chief Minister Jenab Sher-i-Kashmir had remarked to a press correspondent that my report was scientific, pragmatic and full of valuable suggestions. Similarly, when I resigned after 2 years as Chairman Oil Selection Board the Secretary to Government, while accepting my resignation communicated to me the "high appreciation of the Government of India for the excellent work" which I had done as Chairman of the Oil Selection Board. I had so many arbitration cases in rest of the India and in State where I gave awards of crores of rupees which were all up held. Mrs. Gandhi who had appointed me as the first Chairman of the Congress Legal Cell, on her becoming the Prime Minister the next time thanked me profusely for the services rendered and successes as made by me as the President of the Legal Cell, In short I have earned a name, affection and respect from everybody and even from my colleagues and subordinates wherever I worked..

I have visited every State of India except Gujarat on prestigious assignments stayed in Five Star Hotels and enjoyed "J" class air travel. I have been outside the country several times.

I have received a national award from Shri Rajiv Gandhi and an award from the State High Court, and above all from my biradari which is a rare thing.

PERSONALITY

I am grossly overweight in terms of an eminent cardiologist of India, being a huge bundle of unnecessary fat. I look off to myself and would therefore avoid photograph but the general impression is otherwise. In Delhi Officers upto the status of Joint Secretary would come to me and spend considerable time with me and stating that my company gave them peace of mind and relief from tension (news for me).

Towards the end of 1962, vacancy occurred in the Jammu and Kashmir High Court. My name was being suggested which became a hot tussle between Bakshi Ghulam Mohd, the then Prime Minister and Democratic National Conference, its Chief Whip being Mr. D.P. Dhar. This party somehow seemed to have procured an assurance from Delhi that neither I nor the other probable candidate, Raja Jaswant Singh, son-in-law of a member of Bakshi Ghulam Mohd's cabinet, who later retired as a Judge of the Supreme Court, would be selected. I was advised to see Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri the then Home Minister of India. His P.A. said that Shastri Ji was not available as the Parliament was on. However, he asked me to give a ring next morning, that time he told me that Shastri Ji would grant me an interview that very morning at 11 a.m. in room No. 13 in the Parliament House. I reached the Parliament House a few minutes earlier and was led to cellar, where dozens of typewriters and telephones were fixed but not a single soul was there. After a few minutes, a Jamadar came and asked me what I was waiting far. I told that Shastri ji had given me time, to which he replied that Shastri Ji was not there. I told him I would wait. At 11.02 another liveried Jamadar asked me whether I was Janki Dass I said yes and he took me in Shastri Ji's car to his office. There I had about 3/4 of an hour detailed interview. The matter ended there. Mr. Shiv Narayan Fotedar was a friend of Shastri Ji. About three days afterwards. Mr. Fotedar went to Mr. Shastri Ji to recommend me. To start with Shastri told him that there was a High Court Judge's seat vacant in the State and after seeing me he made a determination that post should be given to me and me alone. He praised me beyond description. He told Mr. Fotedar that a radiance eminated from my forehead (mathe par Jhalak) and many other things. In this connection an interesting episode is worth mentioning. Mr. D.P. Dhar was then the Industries Minister. The speakers

in the Assembly would be nominated by Bakshi Ghulam Mohd. and he appealed to us one day prior to his (Dhar's) demand were to be discussed that Mr. D.P. Dhar should not be grilled in the House as he had been sufficiently humiliated in that session. But he (Bakshi) put me as one of the speakers. I did not say much against him (Dhar) except that import licences were being misused, and Mr. D.P. Dhar stood up to reply to debate. He opened his speech sarcastically mentioning that I was to be a Judge of the highest court (as he had felt assured after a visit to Delhi that I would not be selected). The taunt was actually meant for Bakshi Ghulam Mohd. who was sitting in the Assembly. Thereafter, Bakshi Ghulam Mohd. resolved that he would get me appointed within a week. Bakshi went to Delhi, got my file sent to the Prime Minister's Office from the Home Minister's Office and from Prime Minister's Office to the President. The President gave his sanction with in two days, which was sent here through a special courier.

I may refer to a few more instances of the opinion, observations of others about my personality.

1. When Mr. B.K. Nehru came as a Governor of the State a party was thrown in his honour by the then Chief Minister Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. In the party there was a V.I.P. circle consisting about 100 officers and dignitaries. Out of all these dignitaries Mr. Nehru located me and asked Chief Minister who I was. Although I had been in correspondence with him earlier also but we had never seen each other.

2. In my early days of Judgeship an important person desired to get introduced to me. A common friend told the gentleman that he would just make us to meet on a function which was to come soon. When the function was held the inquisitive gentleman told our common friend that he had already located me and pointed out to me.

3. At Bombay at the Santa Cruse Airport when I was travelling from Bombay to Delhi I was near the checking by Security Officer he let me go without making any check and said something which I did not understand. Later the Security Officer sat by my side while we were waiting for the plane to take off.. I asked the Security Officer that he

had said something which I did not understand when I was to be checked. He asked me whether I knew Marathi, I said no, there upon he said that when he was having a look upon my person he did not want to have any check.

4. As president of the prestigious Vishwa Bharati I led a deputation to the administration of Noida with the demand for grant of some land to us. After discussion for sometime the Officer granted us a big chunk of land on nominal rent. When I thanked the officer his reply was that he could not but grant the land as a forceful and impressive personality like me had made the demand.

5. On another occasion amidst a big galaxy of Officers. I was described as very impressive and forceful personality.

I have mentioned these anecdotes to show what people think of my personality although such observation have been made by many many people on different occasions.

There have been few turning points in my career. The first was one after my graduation. My father pressed upon me to take service whereas I stuck to my decision of going in for post-graduation. The second very important turning point was after I had done my M.A., LL.B. I applied to the University for granting me a fellowship valued Rs. 75/- P.M. a big sum during those days and because of mine having done so well at the University examination. The fellowship was sanctioned and I was informed to join the University. I prepared myself and even booked my seat in a bus upto Jammu wherefrom I had to make further booking for onward journey to Lucknow. Formally I thought necessary to seek the blessings of my parents who were living in my native village Muran. When I sought their blessings for this venture both of my parents wept very bitterly and asked me to cancel the programme. I was their first child I would be cut off from them. After getting a Ph.D. a very rare in those days, and would not return to Kashmir but get settled somewhere outside. This weeping and wailing had very great effect upon me with the result that the next morning I went to Srinagar and cancelled my booking and informed the University that I was not joining.

The third turning point was when I was in Delhi working as the

President of the Legal Cell of Mrs. Gandhi. My wife did not like Delhi. I was appointed Chairman of the Pay Commission in the State. I welcomed the decision, joined the State and gave up my assignment in Delhi. It was an unfortunate decision for me because if I had stayed in Delhi I would have been better placed. I need not discuss details.

During my life I had to face some difficult situations outside mostly due to my honesty and sincere hard work. My parents were school teachers and I had started as a Surpanch. I was thoroughly honest, my panchayat being the best. This irritated and stood in the way of some of my influential corrupt Biradari people who first complained against my mother, my father and finally myself as Surpanch. It is a long tale, I think it is enough to say that I won all the battles with disgraceful findings against our complainants. When these corrupt but influential people could not harm me constitutionally, they set my house at Muran on fire. Similarly, I had long period of illness of patience at my place at Shopian. Beginning with my sister who was operated upon for tonsils then over turn of the bus by which we were travelling fracturing the collar bone of my mother which confined both my sister and mother the entire cold months at my residence at Shopian. Immediately followed my wife's illness which took three years to return to health. These stories are very long but I have put these very very briefly.

Our family was a middle class agriculturist. We live comparatively a comfortable contented life with our meagre resources but no debts, as those days the quantum of debts would be proportionate to the size of its holding. My parents were orthodox devout people.

The total expenditure on my education from first primary to post-graduation incurred by my family was only about Rs. 400/-. The rest I would contribute from my merit scholarship earnings. Under these circumstances, I passed my M.A., LL.B. as stated elsewhere.

When I started life as such I had my university students' bedding, a small Darrie with one Pateela, two bronze thalies and a small samawar two cups to start with. Slowly and gradually I procured other necessaries of life in the shape of bedding, utensils and other things.

Later in my practice in Srinagar I built up a big Library with foreign journals which no other lawyer had.

Publishers would send their latest publications on concession rates to me and in this way my Library became very big. I was the first lawyer in Kashmir to own a car and a telephone set. Later on other learned lawyers followed suit.

An interesting episode may be mentioned. After my M.A., LL.B., my father-in-law took me to a saint Mahatma who induldged in Astrology also. My father-in-law with great devotion got my horoscope examined by him. The great saint Astrologer after going through the horoscope remarked that it was a useless horoscope, the person to whom the horoscope belonged would do nothing in life.

I was once upon a time very fond of meat and would have it at least twice a day, except on prohibited days. For many years past I have now become a complete vegetarian.

I was teetotaller all through although I have served and supplied enough of foreign whiskey to big people and friends.

So far as secularism is concerned, I practiced it without any distinction. Almost all high-placed Muslim families of Kashmir were my clients and some of their womenfolk, who observed strict purdah, would feel at ease with me.

In Delhi we had a sweeper, Sohan Vir by name an untouchable. My staff would shirk even to sit by his side. Then I adopted a formula and would make him sit by my side in the car. Once we went on an official tour to Bikaner with my staff, Sohan Vir including. I was lodged in the palace of the Maharaja and the staff were given other accommodation. Then at about 10 in the night Sohan Vir came to my room and said that he was allowed no place to sleep, so where to sleep? I understood the catch and made him sleep in my room on the regal sofa- once the seat of the erstwhile Maharaja!

SOCIAL SCENE

I have rendered some service at the social level also. In Shopian I started a high school from first class to tenth with the help of local magnate of which I continued to be President till I shifted to Srinagar in 1948. I was Vice-President of the Town Area Committee, President being Tehsildar, Kulgam. In fact I exercised all the powers of the Chairman. During World was II essential commodities were controlled . sugar, salt, kerosine oil and cloth issued on permits, which I alone was competent to issue. The local muslim people called me Hazrat-mi-kail, (the angel incharge of sustenance). In 1945, Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru, accompanied by Indira Gandhi, Sheikh Mohd. Abdullah, Bakshi Ghulam Mohd. and others came to Shopian enroute Kounsarnag a famous lake. Huge and grand arrangements were made for this visit of Pt. Jawahar Lal. I met Jawahar Lal for the first time. The local muslims, selected me as their representative for this prestigious party and Pt. Jawahar Lal especially entrusted Indira Gandhi to my care during the trip as we had to go on rocky pony path and walk over glaciers. Incidentally, I may mention that Pt. Jawahar Lal asked me what was my profession at a dinner party at Shopian.I told him that I was a lawyer, to which he retorted that future of my profession was very dark(what a remark).

When I moved to Srinagar in 1948 within a year or so I got entangled in so many social, political and religious organisations. I was Senior Vice-President of Sanatan Dharam Yuvak Sabha, the President being Late Mr. S.N. Fotedar. All the problems of the community governmental or otherwise were handled by this Sabha. In 1949, a deputation of Mr. Fotedar and myself was sent to Delhi to warn the Government of India against plebiscite and seek our future guidance. We spent six months there in Delhi and other places (my self at the cost of my profession) and approached all the important ministers - Jawahar Lal Nehru, Patel, Ayanger, Shayama Prasad etc. and other top leaders of various organisations. I was elected a member of Kashmir Legislative Assembly twice. After our migration from Kashmir. I worked very hard to unify the community and for that purpose spent about Rs. 60,000/- from my purse, held scores of meetings at my and other places.

Before his death, Pt. Gopi Krishan almost caught my feet thrusting

the Samaj Sudhar Samiti to me. After his death, I formed a Trust of the same known as Sudhar Samiti Trust. With the sale of some unproductive and grabbed property at Srinagar, we raised some money which I kept in tight control, acquiring big premises and constructing a big hall, at present being used as a Janjghar at a cost of about Rs. 19 Lakhs. Used by the members of the community for functions like marriages etc. at very low rates and for festivals free of cost. I would mention here that it is the only permanent asset of the community other than Jammu's Kashmiri Pandit Sabha property which is fifty year old.

I have led deputations to various Govt. of India and local Govt. authorities. I have met for the purpose of community all the Prime Ministers right from Jawahar Lal Nehru to the present Shri Vajpayee except Shri Deve Gowda.

In 1973 I was elected unanimously, against my protest, as President of Yuvak Sabha, I made one Sabha out of two conflicting once, got the "Martand" released after seven years.

I was associated with many many important institutions. I was member of two most important trusts the Dharmarth Trust and the Sher-i-Kashmir Trust. I resigned from the Dharmarth trust thrice and Sher-i-Kashmir trust twice. . I was a part of very important institutions D.A.V. National High School and headed the famous Viswa Bharati Educational Institution which is almost a University, located originally in Srinagar, and founded and expanded in Jammu, Noida and Delhi and carrying on teaching almost like a University with a revenue of crores of rupees. I continued to head so many organisations of which I am President, Patron, Chief Patron. etc. At Delhi where I was on official duty for a number of years. I tried to bring together the individual members of the Pamposh Enclave to have some common platform. I held three functions almost all at my cost where very big personalities came. Om Mehta, Shafi Qureshi and number of others were invited. One Mr. D.R. Tamta was the administrator of Delhi Municipal Corporation in those days. I had given an award of 5½ crores in favour of Delhi Municipal Corporation against New Delhi Municipality. Due to my influence with him and other biggies. I got the Pamposh Enclave Colony (then an exclusive property of Kashmiri Pandits) developed at a cost of two lakh-rupees as against rupees 25 lakhs demanded. Similarly, a plot of

land in the colony held by the community was being charged high rate which I got reduced.

The letter-heads of that local organisation mention me as a patron of the organisation. These are a few important events in my life story.

I can proudly say that I was responsible wholly or partially in creating thousands of employments for unemployed Kashmiri Pandits, when I brought it in the notice of Smt. Indira Gandhi the plight of educated unemployed youths of the community..

INTEGRITY

A judge should be like lotus which although in water is not at all wet. I was a lawyer for a pretty long time before I became a judge for 9 years and again went back to the public. At my farewell speeches at different places I told the audience that I was a man from the streets occupied this chair for some time and was going back to the streets. I had no regret.People who knew me or even those who are still living all certify that I was the same person as lawyer, as judge and after retirement holding a very high prestigious positions. Some saints with whom I had contacts loved and praised me because they never found any intoxication of power with me. And even at this age I enjoy the same popularity as I had as lawyer, judge, Chairman of so many important commissions in the whole India.

There is a very complicated question of sociability of judges with some people when they got appointed an High Court or in lower job in the judiciary. They pretend to be unapproachable. Some to them refuse to see even their subordinates at their private residence, what to speak of the people from the public.

In my humble opinion a judge of the High Court must be well versed in law, independent, fearless and punctual. The High Court judges are as much a part of the society as any other person is. In my opinion judges should not be unapproachable as inter-course with subordinate judges and important personalities of the society will enrich their knowledge and weight of the judge and his performance, the so-called unapproachable judges have their own agencies who some time work as brokers.

To my mind this position throws much more responsibility on the Supreme Court and High Court Judge. They are answerable only to God and their conscience. When a reference was made in the High Court about me at the time of appointment as Judge I had stated "taking oath is a solomn and sacred ceremony but the constant oath for the judge is his conscience. If he decides the case or cases according to dictates of his conscience even if the judgement is not correct he is not to be blamed, on the other hand if a judge of a High Court acts against conscience he is blame worthy". Therefore, the position and responsibility of the High Court and Supreme Court Judge is far greater than required of any other official

in the government however highly placed he be. The only requisite qualification for a judge is to have confidence in himself, try to do justice without fear or favour as contained in the oath of office. Some judges try to depend on other authorities to support a view. I would be in the seek-out for a case which would raise me new or complicated point so that I could express my independent views. Once when I was hearing a writ petition, the then Advocate General who was arguing the case on behalf of the government requested me to postpone the judgement as a similar case was pending before the Hon'ble Supreme Court. Because the Government would usually be apprehensive of my judgements I retorted "Mr. Advocate General if you repeat these words I shall proceed in contempt against you. You mean to suggest that I should not exercise powers because Hon'ble Supreme Court is seized of a similar matter. My powers are the same as that of Hon'ble Chief Justice of Supreme Court with this difference that Hon'ble Judge of the Supreme Court can set aside my judgement". Now-a-days appointments are made on political, regional and communal basis which has affected the fair name of judiciary. There are unnecessary delays in the dispensation of justice. I would refer to one or two cases. In Delhi in 1972, Sant Karpal Singh an eminent saint of international fame and myself gave an award in dispute in a sikh family. Got it registered and put it in the court. To this day the case has not been decided, though eleven of twelve claimants had accepted the award. What is more interesting, when Sant Karpal Singh arbitrator died, for three years his legal representative were sought to be brought on record. I was summoned against the instructions of the Supreme Court twice. No statement recorded and not even expenses ordered by the learned Judge given to me. The file is so thick, mostly consisting of interim orders, that when it comes to a learned judge, he puts its off to other six months without touching a paper there.

In a case a learned High Court judge refused to allow amendment of a suit for declaration and to include the relief of possession also. The learned Judge refused to grant the permission relying on Order 2 rule 2 CPC which applies to the omission of a plaintiff to include the whole claim in a previous suit. The order was so silly that the Supreme Court allowed the special leave appeal in the minutes, but interestingly awarded a cost of ten thousand rupees although the total valuation of the property

was less than ten thousand.

In another arbitration case, the Supreme Court ordered, 13 years back that the case should be disposed of within three months and the case was listed as No.1 on the list still it was adjourned with the observation "not reached" for reasons, better known to the Hon'ble Judges.

I may recite a interesting incident. One of the big Kashmiri Muslims was a friend of mine. I was his lawyer during the days of my practice. He went for Haj pilgrimage. On his return I wanted to congratulate him. I had disposed of my car those days and I was without one. I sent for him car and he supplied me the same in which I went to congratulate him. In the way one of the ministers of the Government who was once a petty employee of the big man saw me, and this minister, perhaps due to his inferiority complex, thought that I was about to ruin him. He reported the matter to the Chief Minister who made a mild complaint to our Lordship the Chief Justice and who in his own way tried to defend me stating that my relation with the big man spread over decades of years. However the Chief Justice talked about this complaint to me. I was furious with him and tried to convey my displeasure to the Chief Minister. After a short while the Chief Minister and myself and others met at a party, I straightway went to the Chief Minister and put my protest in strong words. Nutshell of my protest was that if a ride in somebody's vehicle would throw a doubt on my integrity then God save the State. I was a social creature and could not ignore my relations which spread over decades of years. Judgeship was a temporary phase of function. My further complaint to the Chief Minister was that the concerned person had made this complaint to my Chief Justice because I was a Kashmiri. He could not and would not dare to do so if I were from outside the State. Justice's integrity was not so cheap and if a Judge travelled in somebody's vehicle how would this cast doubt on his integrity. The Chief Minister or anybody else could know about such act.

The Chief Minister apologised a number of times and he said that he talked about the matter with Chief Justice because the big man was reported to have talked against India while he was on his pilgrimage. This trait of accommodation is a permanent feature of my character.

I had clear cut ideas about the fate of cases and no pressure even

from my colleagues would make me change my stand. An interesting case is that of an IPS Officer. The Vigilance Commission had started investigating into a case against him. He came to the High Court with a writ challenging the jurisdiction of the Vigilance Commission over an IPS Officer. We, the full bench granted, the writ holding that Vigilance Commission has no jurisdiction over him. Thereafter the Government applied for leave to appeal to the Supreme Court. This petition again came before a full bench but with this difference that the Hon'ble Chief Justice had retired in the meantime. So to constitute a full bench, a protege of the new Chief Justice was the third Judge to hear this leave petition. When I went to the chamber of the Chief Justice where we would assemble before entering the court, the Hon'ble Chief Justice tried to convince me that we should not grant leave. He said that the police officer was a father of a number of daughters and hence we should save him from the botheration and expenses of fighting the case in the Supreme Court. In the first place I was amazed how the Chief Justice knew the police officer's private life but I told him categorically that it was a fit case for leave to appeal and I would hold some view in the court. The third judge could act according to the dictates of the Chief Justice and the object would be achieved, two of the bench being of one view and myself of a contrary view. I withstood very hard canvassing of the Hon'ble Chief Justice. When we entered the court and took up the case the Hon'ble Chief Justice fell upon the counsel of the IPS Officer who strongly pleaded against grant of leave-a very peculiar change of attitude in a few minutes. I was smiling in my sleeves and the leave was granted to the State to file an appeal.

Judges should decide cases boldly and fairly fearing God alone, if they believe in Him and no other consideration more so political should affect their judgements. I shall mention two cases here which speak for themselves.

1. A very important case highly critical politically, was admitted by the Division Bench, matter on it was referred to full bench. For 9 years the case was listed and delisted according to the political atmosphere of the time till that Hon'ble Chief Justice left the State and got another assignment.
2. Another case of great importance was decided by Division Bench,

the judgement having been written by me where in we held that a Kashmiri Girl would loose her all right in her paternal property if she marries a Non-Kashmiri. The correctness or otherwise of this case has raised a big controversy in the political circles of the State. A full bench has been constituted to examine the correctness or otherwise of the judgement, but the case is being adjourned for last ten years without being heard.

A pertinent question may strike somebody as to why I accepted a petty salary of judgeship against lucrative practice in which income was considered very high. The reply to this query is that I was overworked and overburdened in my profession. I had too much of work as already stated, I had two paid juniors to look after my work in the subordinate courts. I represented all the Banks except the Punjab National Bank; and big people from the Governor, the Chief Minister then called Prime Minister and other big magnates from all walks of life were my clients and required my constant consultations. Besides, I was a member of so many social and literary organisations; In short I had a very little time for rest. The only period of rest was my enjoying a cup of tea at the then famous restaurant at Ahdoo's which I would visit daily paid huge bills because invariably I had to entertain some guests as result where of they gave me 12.5% discount. I would relax for an hour or so and then attend to other matters and reach my house late in evening, sometime even after mid night. I had kept a permanent stenographer who would spend two/three nights at my place. I would give him dictation in the evening and he would type out early in the morning. I would hardly have 3-4 hours sleep, get up at 4 A.M. and have shave in my bed and a bath and then be in my office which was in the ground floor of my house before 5 A.M. where I would study cases till 8.30 A.M., grant audience to my clients and hear them for 3/4 of an hour.

This state of affairs had been a great burden on me physically and mentally. Besides a Judgeship with less remuneration was more hon'ble than large income as a Vakil. A Chief Justice of Delhi High Court who was a friend of mine had become a Judge leaving a huge lucrative practice. He would say that he had sacrificed huge practice for being addressed as His Lordship and the powers that he enjoyed. The same would in a smaller

degree apply to my case.

From my experience I think a High Court Judge or a Judge of the Supreme Court should have unsuspectable integrity.

He should be very well acquainted with laws.

He should do natural justice. By behaviour he should be patient and hear parties patiently.

A Judge should be hard working. In addition to hearing the arguments of the consel he should himself thoroughly study the case and study law to give a good judgement.

A Judge may or may not have social relations but in deciding a case he should be guided simply what the law tells him and no other consideration, political, religious, social, communal, etc. allowed to affect his judgement. He should be as I earlier said, a lotus in water.

A Judge should not grant adjournment unnecessarily. Nowadays the complaint is that Judges adjourn the cases number of times on the request of the Counsel or to avoid working. Nowadays I have found cause-lists are made of hundreds of case before a learned Judge or Bench and hardly 8 or 10 cases and those too of admission are reached, thus causing huge inconvenience and expense to the litigants.

DIGNITY OF JUDGES

I was very conscious rather over-conscious of the powers of the High Court Judge and in that behalf I have written number of protests to the two governors Mr. Bhagwan Sahai and Mr. L.K. Jha and a number of them to the Chief Minister, the then Chief Secretary Mr. Dhave who was Lt. Governor of Delhi later, and Mr. Surrender Nath (who perished in an aircrash as Governor of Punjab in Himachal) the then IG Police J&K. I got an apology from the Sheikh Government when I was Chairman of the Pay Commission and even from the Government of India when I was the head of a Commission dealing with Suratgarh Farm.

We had an adhoc Judge in our High Court who had retired from Allahabad. This gentlemen bragged of deep knowledge of law which was shallow and would go about saying that he is teaching law to the Judges in this state. Being a relative of the then Chief Secretary, he persuaded the Hon'ble Chief Minister perhaps through his Chief Secretary that his position should be considered next to the Chief Justice in the matter of hearing cases. The Hon'ble Chief Justice and other Hon'ble Judges agreed to this arrangement but when the Chief Justice talked about the matter to me I did not agree and said he was only an adhoc Judge and in order of precedence would come after the permanent Judges. Despite much persuation of the Hon'ble Chief Justice, I stuck to my stand and told the Chief Justice that he may not put this gentleman with me on a Division Bench, about other Judges I could not say. The matter was referred to Hon'ble Chief Justice of India who agreed with me.

I shall mention a few other instances also.

Once Mr. Bhagwan Sahai, the then Governor of the State, had thrown a music party to which I along with other dignitaries was invited. I was accompanied by two more gentleman the then Advocate General and a member of Public Service Commission. When we reached the venue the Private Secretary of the Governor made us sit in the second row although only one chair out of ten was occupied in the first row. I felt greatly insulted and left the show halfway. Next day I addressed a letter to then Secretary by name who was away from the State that day. The Governor, however opened the letter and sent me a reply to the letter. I almost remember the words of the learned Governor used in that letter. He said that he called the explanation from his Private Secretary who had thought as I was

accompanied by two more gentleman (both respectable) he thought I might like to sit with them hence he offered the second row to us. The Governor further wrote that he was not satisfied with this explanation, he should have offered a chair in first row or occupy a chair in the first row. The Governor said he took a note of my letter and apologised for his Private Secretary's behaviour and issued instruction for the reservation of seats by name for the Judge of the High Court whenever they were invited.

On one occasion a very high dignitary of the Government, the power behind the thrown, held a symposium in which High Court Judges were also invited. I along with another learned Judge of the High Court was invited and we were made to sit in the third row although there were many seats vacant in first row. Next day I wrote a letter of strong protest to the then Chief Secretary Mr. P.K. Dave, complaining about the treatment shown to us. I wrote this letter on behalf of both of us although the other gentleman refused to sign it fearing lodging a complaint against such a powerful person.

The Chief Secretary called an explanation from the high personage and issued instructions for proper seating of High Court Judges, when invited. On another occasion on the Republic day the Dy. Commissioner incharge of the show offered me a seat in second row which I refused to occupy and left the seeing. On my complaint the Dy. Commissioner was reprimanded.

There were other numerous occasions when I took up cudgles with the authorities concerned for not showing proper respect for the High Court Judges. A successor in my office after my retirement told me that I had got proper recognition for the High Court Judges but that special treatment had been given up by the Government. I once wrote a four page letter to Mr. G.M. Sadiq the then Chief Minister complaining against his Government and his officers for not giving due respect to the High Court Judges. I further remarked in the letter that I should not have complaint to make as I was retiring within a few months. It is said that he took strong action on this letter of mine. I got written apologies from the powerful state administration and even the Secretariat of Mrs. Indira Gandhi who was then the Prime Minister of India.

COMMUNALISM

When I was appointed Chairman pay Commission by the Kashmir government, a muslim gentleman was selected as my Secretary but he refused to work with me alleging that I was communal and had spoiled his career. The then Chief Secretary acquainted me with this development. This gentleman had gone to the Chief Minister Sheikh Mohd. Abdullah with the same complaint. The real fact was that this gentleman had committed grave irregularities in an election matter, the election petition whereof was heard by me. On merits he deserved prosecution and stern action. He was my neighbour and not doing "real justice" I passed some strictures only against this gentleman which stood in his way of becoming an IAS Officer. I explained this position both to the Chief Secretary and Chief Minister. Both of them had already disbelieved the gentleman knowing me well as they did. Thereafter, the Chief Secretary told me that he would give me an IAS Officer as my secretary but that gentleman had brought discredit to the Government at two stations where he was posted as D.C.I accepted him without reservation as my Secretary and we passed two years with close cooperation and discipline. He was a capable officer and I had no complaint against him.

I have to state a very famous and interesting case. A certain pandit had been put in detention under Security Act. I was in Jammu those days but was expected to be in Srinagar after a few days. The detenue presented a writ petition and got it placed before me (notorious Writ Judge) when I read the petition, the detenue had pleaded illness for relief from his detention. After going through the petition I directed that the detenue be got medically examined. I again came to Jammu. After about three weeks I went to Srinagar agent the petition was again placed before me. The three eminent Government Doctors had opined that the detenue was really ill. I asked the party counsel to show me if I could release him on the medical report, his illness having been certified by 3 top doctors of the State. The Counsel for the detenue

read a head-note from a supreme court judgement wherein it was laid down that the High court had powers in certain cases to set aside detention. The other side, the State, was represented by Additional Advocate General. He did not say anything particular about the arguments of the detenue's counsel. In open court I declared the judgment and released him on bail of Rs. 50,000 at that time, however, I did not read this Supreme Court Judgement as the counsel for the State had put no argument against the accused.

The matter assumed grave proportions and it was conveyed to the hon'ble Chief Minister that I had released the detenue as he was a Kashmiri Pandit. Meanwhile my order being illegal was sent by the Government to Delhi for lodging an appeal in the supreme Court. They were advised that they should put an application for cancellation of bail in the High court itself. Such an application was made but no judge consented to hear it as it was a judgement from me. On my return on 3rd visit to Srinagar the application for cancellation of bail was again put up before me. At that time the state was represented by the advocate general. After hearing the arguments from both sides I was convinced that my order was illegal. I asked the Advocate General to get the gentleman who represented the State in the case earlier to come before me. He avoided coming to me but after half an hour he came to me. I was sitting in the Chief Justices room as the Hon'ble Chief Justice was out of State. The Additional Advocate General told me that he was accused by the government of not properly arguing the case.

I set aside my order stating that I had no hesitation that my order was wrong my only fault was that I had not gone through the judgement of the Supreme Court as no point had been made by the Counsel of the State. Even my remark admitting my judgement to be wrong was a matter of surprise for others.

Although, I was known for my coolness throughout my career as Judge I shouted and said if the learned Counsel was accused of not arguing the case properly it was stated against me that I ordered bail because he was a Pandit. I used strong language against the Government and the Chief Minister and even Mrs. Indira Gandhi who

was the Prime Minister. The nutshell of my uproar was that it was intolerable for me to be accused of communalism as a Judge. The lawyers who were seated there felt surprised at my almost loosing temper because they had never seen till then nor thereafter also seen that I was capable of getting into such temper as a judge. This uproar from me reached the Chief Minister who was very much upset and a deputation of senior officers of the Government waited upon me inspite of my protest to rebut the news that I had released detenue because of communal consideration. In this private meeting I was very rash and in nutshell told the big officers of the government who met me there that I was not prepared to hear such reports. They pressed me to let them know who was my informer, but I letting it known that I did not want any man to be effected. In the long meeting in a nutshell I told the representatives of the Government that they could not touch my hair. If it were in power of the Government I would have got dismissed when Bakshi Ghulam Mohd. was removed from the Prime Ministership of the State, as I was supposed to be his protegee. I further said that in a day the neck of the Government lies in our hands in a number of cases where in we could say anything against the Government. I told them that I was as much a Kashmiri as an Hon'ble Chief Minister or any body else and I had always upheld the Government in grave cases of delicate nature. On the other hand I had never asked for petty favour from the Government. The discussions of the meeting were reported to the Chief Minister, in the evening, he personally phoned me to meet him the next day on a cup of tea. He was good enough to state that the high image court was higher because of me and many other things in my favour. I left for Jammu next morning. The Chief Minister conveyed his anxiety in requesting me that I should meet him after a few days. When I went to Srinagar again, I met the Chief Minister who offered unconditional apology for the report which had been conveyed to him.

BIAS

No body is above the law but this maxim is more uttered than practiced. With my long experience with the judicial system I have regretfully found that the opulent and influential individuals usually succeed in a court of law. These cases are supported by false and cooked evidence, and the Police in some cases with connivance of an influential accused would keep some weakness in the challan deliberately to ensure the accused being acquitted of the charges before a court of law. They use their approaches to various quarters including judicial officers too. Only recently the judiciary has tried to assert itself and exercise authority in prosecuting the Prime Minister, Chief Minister and other dignitaries. This is a happy sign in the judiciary and will restore some sort of discipline and integrity and honesty in people. An interesting case comes to my mind. There was a complaint against a Pandit Head Constable that he had taken a sum of Rs. 500/- from somebody in a habeas corpus petition to the IGP. The complaint was filed a frivolous and not proved. Anonymous letter was sent to the then Chairman Anti-corruption who made his own enquiry in the case, ultimately recommending the dismissal of the Head Constable. The person who was supposed to have paid Rs. 500/- to one Ghulam Mohd. Constable who accompanied the Head Constable and was neither witness nor accused in the case. Therefore, the learned judge inferred the constable must have paid the money to the Head Constable who had won over the witness as he was very influential. This judgement came to me in writ petition. My judicial conscience was shocked by this judgement. I set it aside and passed grave strictures against the learned judge. Such bias is regrettable and unfortunate and I am sorry to remark that such bias continues to influence the judgement of some judicial officers.

In one case before me a Secretary to the Government had dubbed a petitioner as the most inefficient and unworthy of a promotion. But on inspection of the departmental file it was found that this very gentleman had sung high praises about the efficiency and suitability of the petitioner. I called the Secretary and confronted him with his two contradictory statements and inspite of he being a close friend of mine I started proceedings against him though ultimately on his confession that he had made such contradictory statements on instruction from higher quarters I acquitted him with a written apology by him.

I need not mention other cases which are too many but the crux of the whole matter was to maintain the dignity of judges of the High Court, they should not behave in a manner derogatory to their dignity.

APOLOGY

As remarked earlier some enlightened well-wishers urged me to write something about my life and experience. A full auto biography was out of question. Although I was possessed of very valuable material which I had come-across during my life. As this autobiography would not be received well without supporting references and material. I, therefore, decided to write something about my tenure as a judge of Jammu and Kashmir High Court. I prepared a list of important judgements given by me individually under different headings civil, criminal and writ etc. I mentioned some cases under each chapter which had historical, legal, social, economic and political implications. The judgements found prominent place in media those days and were commented upon favourably. Although these judgements covered various subjects not a single judgement was set aside upto the Supreme Court. This collection would be contained in a booklet of about a hundred pages but to my misfortune the draft was so intermixed, misplaced, put out of context in two different computer operations. The fact was that there was a mess of material with neither head nor tail. The one draft being worst than the other. This state of affairs made me desperate and I came to the conclusion that the whole mess to be put in order would be an impossible task for a man of my age and old age ailments. In utter frustration and dejection I gave up the idea of authoring such a booklet and undertook to pen-down a few haphazard narration of certain events in my life. My narrations have been very brief as detailed version would involve a lot of space and enough time.

I shall therefore elaborate some points mentioned in the previous chapters though the same may be out of place and out of context. I shall begin with my Yuvak Sabha responsibilities when Presidentship of the Yuvak Sabha was thrust upon me against my will and protest. Practically gaging my mouth to utter any of my disapproval we started renovating dead Sabha which had two rival groups under the same name. I made one sabha of the two and resolved their antagonism and differences. The Sheetal Nath office was in shambles, the wooden stair case broken and unusable. I got the same repaired and purchased a Darrie and some chairs out of my own pocket to make the members

sit. Martand I got released after seven years of closure with tough meetings with the then Chief Minister Syed Mir Qasim. I collected Rs. 33000/- for Martand expenses from non-Kashmiris but after sometime I left for Delhi on some assignments. From Delhi I managed an assurance for handsome yearly amount for running of the paper. Out of which I got Rs. 8000/- sent to the Martand within a month and a half. On reaching Srinagar I was told in a meeting of the then representatives of Yuvak Sabha namely Pt. Harjee Lal, Mr. G.N. Bhan and Mr. M.K. Tickoo and others that only Rs. 1500/- had been received. I therefore on my return to Delhi requested the Delhi authorities to stop payment. It may be incidentally remarked that Martand financial demands have been my headache throughout. We arranged meetings in different localities in Srinagar and District headquarters thus giving a shape and new life to the organisation. Lead deputations and presented memoranda from time to time. All this came to an end when I stayed at Delhi from number of years.

In Delhi I did certain things a brief mention whereof have been made in the previous chapters.

After insurgency, the Pandits held a three days conference in Jammu in the year 1990. I collected about Rs. 40000/- from outside the State for this function. One interesting episode may be mentioned here in this connection. We had invited Sh. Rama Nand Sagar as a Chief Guest of the function and had booked rooms in the Ashoka Hotel for his stay. Due to cancellation of the service by the Airlines he could not come and we lodged our guests from Delhi Samiti Mr. C.L. Gaddo and others in the Hotel. On the 3rd day, the hotel wallas would not allow them to leave unless bill of about Rs. 5000/- was cleared. I was again caught and asked to come to the rescue of the functionaries of the convention to pay this amount to bail out Mr. Gadoo and others from the Hotel. Though Delhi Samiti wallas do not offer even a glass of water to our representatives when they visit Delhi.

After the riots of 1986, I wrote a controversial article in the 'Kashmir Times' under the caption 'Wither Kashmiri Pandits', warning my 'biradari' that these 1986 riots were a rehearsal, or atrial ball, match to follow, which nobody needed.

Thereafter from 1990 upto 1998, I hosted so many meetings at my place of the various so called leaders of different so called organisations of our community, In Jammu about Rs. 50000/- I had to spent from my own pocket over this project and a Maha Samelan of Pandits which never took place.

Besides passing sleepless nights and organising meetings I went on with other activities of Pandits for instance leading deputations and arranging Dharnas and other things. As a token of the gratitude of our community to the BJP, I offered myself for arrest and went to jail alongwith venerable Vajpayee Sahib.

I have made some mention of a construction at Durganagar. This construction was undertaken after collecting some money from the tit-bits of property of Samaj Sudhar Samiti Trust in Kashmir. I put the whole money in a FDR and in Jammu we started this construction which has cost us so far about 19 lakh rupees. At present the premises is used as a Janjghar. It is a very beautiful and wonderful site, noise free, pollution free with a big hall, kitchen, marble veranda, a spacious compound, sanitary fitted bathrooms etc. It is really charming in appearance with advance booking almost 9 months in advance because of its low rates (community and other social gatherings not being charged) as compared with rates of other Janjghars in the city thus benefiting substantially materially hundreds of users as compared with hollow slogans and empty promises by other leaders of organisations.

Before this I had constructed Dharam Shalla in the premises of Kashmiri Pandit Sabha Amphala Jammu at a cost of Rs. 19000/- out of which Rs. 9000/- had been given to me by late eminent saint Swami Nand Lal Jee of Ticker. Similarly we paid this to Kashmiri Pandit Sabha Rs. 25000/- with which it constructed the roof of the ground floor which had been without any roof for the last 40 years.

All these facts though still consealing could not be put in the previous chapters of this publication. The author feels somewhat relief of the mental burden that was lying heavily on him after narrating a few of these experiences otherwise even an unknown person like myself would die unheard, unwept and unsung. May God Bless us all.

EPILOGUE

Even now with my ailments and old age I am writing articles and conducting huge correspondence with powers in India and outside. I feel proud that the Central Government takes serious notice and show keen interest in my letters, appreciation is conveyed to me off and on.

But my regret is that my community is perhaps annoyed with me that very few Pandits accept my namaskar, I have presided over so many functions in Srinagar, in Jammu and at Delhi. Generally, my name is omitted and if sometimes my name is mentioned, I am shown as a mum-dummy not a word is stated of what I said. This phenomenon I can explain by the following episode. Vishwa Bharati Institution has been expanded improved to become a gigantic educational institution with crores of rupees as its revenue in Srinagar, Jammu, Noida and Delhi with my efforts. Recently in Delhi, a gentleman was highly talking of Vishwa Bharati and its achievement, a very close relation of mine to whom he was talking admitted the achievements of the institution, but about me his only remark was that I also had something to do with the institution. Although he knew the detailed part played by me, this remark gives the crux of the matter as to other things done by me in my life.

I have in my humble way served the state and my community without any recognition for the services rendered. I have no fans who would publicise my services, and am by temperament shy and not an emotional orator. Recognition or no recognition up to my last breath I shall try do so, and simply pray that my brothren should discard their individual aggrandisement but follow a programme of collection patriotism to save the community from extinction.

God bless all.

SOME REMINISCENCES

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